

# Greece

Conditions are improving in the mainland, as the Government continues to close temporary sites. However, **the nearly 5,000 sea and land arrivals this month** exacerbated further

overcrowding and poor conditions in the border reception centres. Many, including the vulnerable, are staying in makeshift shelter. **UNHCR urged** the acceleration of winter preparations on the islands,

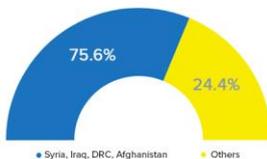
and in coordination with the authorities transferred **over 2,000 eligible, vulnerable people** to continue their asylum applications in the mainland and Crete.

**46,462** refugees and migrants in Greece<sup>1</sup>  
**32,810** in the mainland  
**13,652** on the islands

**33,595** eligible people received cash assistance from UNHCR this month

**36,921** people have so far benefited from UNHCR accommodation<sup>2</sup>

**15,636** people transferred from the islands to the mainland (UNHCR supported)<sup>3</sup>



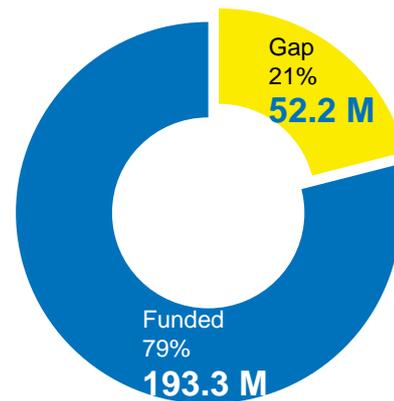
**75.6%** of arrivals in 2017 are from Syria, Iraq, DRC and Afghanistan

<sup>1</sup>UNHCR estimates as of 31 October 2017  
<sup>2</sup>Since the start of the programme in November 2015  
<sup>3</sup>Between June 2016 and October 2017

## FUNDING (AS OF 9 NOVEMBER)

**USD 245.9 M**

requested for the Greece operation



## UNHCR PRESENCE

### Staff:

405 National Staff

66 International Staff

### Offices:

1 Branch Office in Athens

3 Mainland Offices in

Attika, Thessaloniki,

Ioannina

6 Island Offices in Lesbos,

Chios, Samos, Leros,

Kos, and Rhodes



An asylum-seeker in Lesbos island prepares to board the ferry to Athens. October 2017. ©UNHCR/G. Kyvernitis

## Working with Partners

- UNHCR supports the Government of Greece who coordinates the refugee response. The Office works with other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, state institutions, community-based organizations, refugee and host communities through sectoral Working Groups at the national and field levels.

## Main Activities

### ESTIA Accommodation and Cash Assistance

- Cash assistance restores dignity and empowers asylum-seekers and refugees who can now choose how to cover their basic needs. It also contributes directly to the economy of the host community through the purchase of services and goods. This month, 33,595 people received cash assistance in Greece from UNHCR, and the UNHCR-funded Greece Cash Alliance partners.
- By the end of October, UNHCR had created 17,907 places to house vulnerable asylum-seekers and refugees in rented accommodation. Urban accommodation helps provide people with a sense of normalcy and facilitates their access to services, including education. It also facilitates the eventual integration of those who will remain in Greece, while the host population benefits from the renting of their apartments. So far, 36,921 people have benefited from UNHCR's accommodation in Greece since November 2015.
- UNHCR works with the Government, local authorities in several Municipalities and NGOs to provide urban accommodation and cash assistance to asylum-seekers in Greece, funded by the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation (ESTIA) of the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

### Protection

- To alleviate the overcrowded conditions in the Reception and Identification Centres (RICs) of the islands, UNHCR continued to work with the Ministry of Migration Policy to transfer eligible asylum-seekers from the islands to urban accommodation in the mainland and Crete or to sites in the mainland from where to continue their asylum applications. This month the Ministry of Migration Policy with UNHCR's support intensified transfers in response to the increased arrivals, supporting 2,067 asylum-seekers from Lesbos (862), Chios (308), Samos (714), Kos (80), Leros (90), and other islands (13). A total of 15,636 people have been assisted with transfers from the islands to the mainland since June 2016.
- UNHCR also continued to provide legal aid through partners to asylum-seekers and beneficiaries of international protection. This includes legal aid on asylum proceedings and access to rights, as well as on family reunion under the Dublin Regulation to other EU Member States. Between January 2016 and August 2017, 7,500 people received legal aid.

- UNHCR supports the Asylum Service by helping upon request caseworkers with on-the-job training and advice on drafting decisions and conducting interviews. In September, UNHCR helped in over 1,000 instances.

### **Child Protection**

- Only one out of three unaccompanied children in Greece can be accommodated in shelters, as the number of 2,950 children by far exceeds the 1,114 available places. As a result, children continue to risk spending extended periods in the reception and identification centres (RICs) and in protective custody. This can have serious repercussions on their protection and wellbeing, and unfortunately affects an increasing number of children. This month, over 116 children are in police detention, 287 at the RICs, and another 206 children in safe zones in open accommodation sites (EKKA Statistics).
- In response, UNHCR and partners are working with the authorities to develop diverse alternative care arrangements. One of these is Supported Independent Living (SIL) where children will be assisted by dedicated guardians and support teams.
- In addition, UNHCR facilitates the transfer of children who turn eighteen to rented housing in its Accommodation Scheme. This helps provide very much needed space in shelters and also ensures support to the young adults during this transitional period which is often challenging and represents particular risks and concerns.
- UNHCR also provides advice and technical support to the Government and expert staff to EKKA, the agency responsible for the referral of unaccompanied children to shelters, and coordinates with humanitarian actors and stakeholders in monitoring and developing Standard Operating Procedures to ensure minimum standards for child protection.

### **Sexual and Gender Based Violence**

- The overcrowded conditions in the reception centres of the islands and the poor conditions of some sites in the mainland translate into poor shelter allocation. This leads to a lack of privacy and compromises safe access to WASH facilities, thus heightening the risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). It thus adds to the vulnerability of refugees who are already suffering from the sudden breakdown of family and community structures as a result of their forced displacement.
- UNHCR works on SGBV prevention and response by pro-actively identifying people at risk, referring them to appropriate services, and by providing legal information and counselling. UNHCR also conducts awareness raising sessions and campaigns.
- UNHCR works through national NGOs, DIOTIMA-Centre for Research on Women Issues, the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) and Arsis to prevent and respond to SGBV in sites in the mainland and urban locations in Athens. UNHCR also works through the International Rescue Committee for the provision of services in Kara Tepe, Lesbos Island.
- UNHCR and partners have developed referral pathways for refugee-hosting sites and urban accommodation facilities so that survivors of SGBV receive the support they need.
- Finally, UNHCR conducts trainings for state and non-state actors in Greece to strengthen the prevention and response to SGBV nationally. This month, UNHCR with

UNFPA organized a train-the-trainers session on SGBV case management for 22 actors around Greece.

### Education

- The Ministry of Education estimates that some 2,500 refugee and asylum-seeking children attend regular school classes in Greece, the majority of whom reside in urban accommodation. As enrolment in schools continues, the Ministry estimates that an additional 2,000 children will also soon attend Greek schools. In the coming months, an additional 2,400 children residing in camps are expected to begin afternoon reception classes, which aim to facilitate their transition into the public school system.
- UNHCR supports non-formal education on the islands, where formal education is not yet available for most children.

### Health

- UNHCR works to ameliorate refugees' and asylum-seekers' access to healthcare, working closely with the Ministry of Health and other partners.
- This month, UNHCR with UNFPA delivered a training for KEELPNO's newly recruited medical staff of the PHILOS programme. The staff, who will be delivering primarily healthcare and conducting vulnerability assessments were trained on medical vulnerabilities, the relevant legal framework, sexual and reproductive health, and the clinical management of rape and SGBV amongst others.
- A particular problem in Greece is the lack of public mental health institutions. UNHCR is trying to identify alternative referral pathways to direct those who are affected by mental health issues to public institutions.
- UNHCR also funds specific health services in Lesbos and Chios, as well as in Attika. This includes primary and psychosocial support in Lesbos and Chios, as well as doctors at the polyclinic of the municipality of Athens, such as a paediatrician, psychologist and others.

### Durable Solutions

- The enhanced capacity of the Asylum Service in Greece have translated into an accelerated rate for the granting of status to those in need of international protection. As such, nearly 7,000 people were granted refugee status or subsidiary protection between January and September 2017, nearly double the number of 2,700 people recognized as refugees during the entire year of 2016.
- This translates into a pressing need to support recognized refugees' transition from the assistance they received as asylum-seekers to the national programmes they are eligible for in Greece on the same terms and conditions as Greek nationals. To facilitate this transition, UNHCR with the Government and relevant actors have agreed on a transitional period of some months during which recognized refugees can access cash assistance and accommodation.
- The Government announced the adoption of a comprehensive social integration policy for refugees and migrants as one of its priorities for the end of 2017 and UNHCR stands ready to offer its support.

### Relocation and Returns

- In October, 841 people relocated from Greece to other EU Member States according to the Asylum Service, bringing the total to 21,203 people since the start of the programme.
- Also in October, 57 people were returned from Greece to Turkey in the framework of the E.U.- Turkey Statement. Since 20 March 2016, 1,393 people have been returned to Turkey.

### Logistics

- Many of the sites in the mainland are remote from services and public transportation. UNHCR ensures that this does not hinder people's access to asylum or services. In October, UNHCR provided transportation to some 4,800 people to the Asylum Service, Embassies, accommodation and sites as well as for relocation in Attika and Northern Greece.

### Support to Local Communities

- The Mayor of Lesvos thanked UNHCR for the 31 containers the organization provided to the municipality that enabled the children's smooth return to school. The containers were used as classrooms for three kindergartens and four elementary schools and high schools that had suffered damages, along with many other buildings as a result of the destructive earthquake in Lesvos last June.
- UNHCR donated equipment to the hospital of Kos, as a gesture of appreciation to the local community for their support to asylum-seekers on their island. UNHCR will also make donations to the islands of Rhodes, Tilos and Kastelorizo.
- In Northern Greece, UNHCR through partner CRS constructed a playground for local and refugee children in Nea Michanonia, in the Municipality of Thermaikos.

### Partners

In October UNHCR worked through 34 partners in 9 sectors. UNHCR worked on Protection with Arsis, GCR, KSPM-ERP, METAdrasi, Praksis, Diotima, ICMC, UNOPS and DRC; on Child Protection with Arsis, Faros, Iliaktida, METAdrasi, NCDP, Nostos and Praksis; On Cash with Care, CRS, IFRC, IRC, Mercy Corps and Samaritan's Purse; On Accommodation with Arsis, Faros, Iliaktida, Nostos, Praksis, Solidarity Now, CRS and Local Authorities of Athens, Thessaloniki, Livadia, Crete, Trikala, Nea Filadelfia – Nea Chalkidona, Karditsa, Larisa.; On NFI, shelter & WASH with Samaritan's Purse; On Site Management Support with DRC, Intersos, Samaritan's Purse, UNOPS and Reception and Identification Service; On Health with MDM; On Peaceful coexistence & Integration with Arsis, KEAN, Faros, Solidarity Now, Samaritan's Purse, Intersos and UNOPS; On Public awareness raising with TENet-Gr, UNOPS.

## External / Donors Relations

### Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

United States of America (266 M) | Sweden (76 M) | Private Donors Spain (54 M) | Netherlands (52 M) | United Kingdom (45 M) | Norway (41 M) | Private Donors Republic of Korea (26 M) | Japan (25 M) | Denmark (23 M) | Australia (19 M) | Private Donors Italy (17 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | Private Donors USA (14 M) | France (14 M) | Private Donors Japan (14 M) | Germany (12 M) | Private Donors Sweden (11 M) | Italy (10 M)

### Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

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### Thanks to the donors for the Greece Operation

European Union (190.5 M) | Spain (1.9 M) | Republic of Korea (0.8 M) | Fondation BNP Paribas (0.4 M) | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (0.3 M) | The Big Heart Foundation (0.1 M)

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